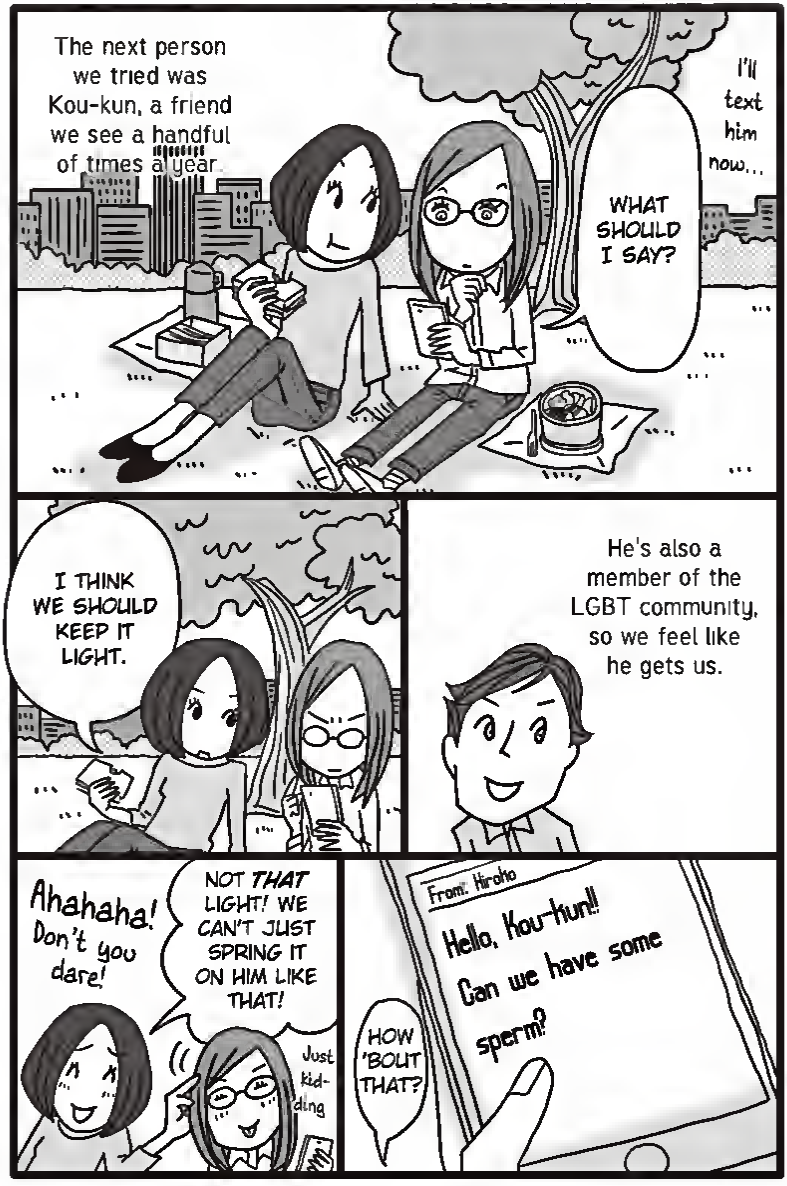
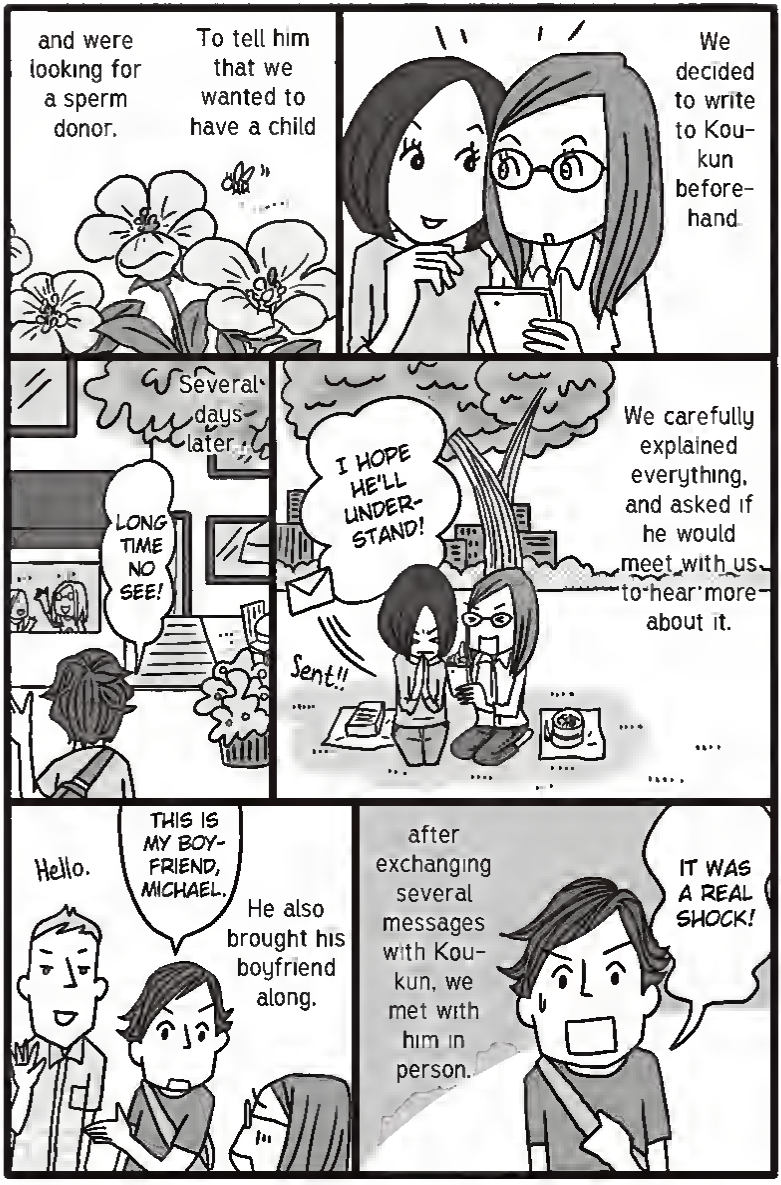
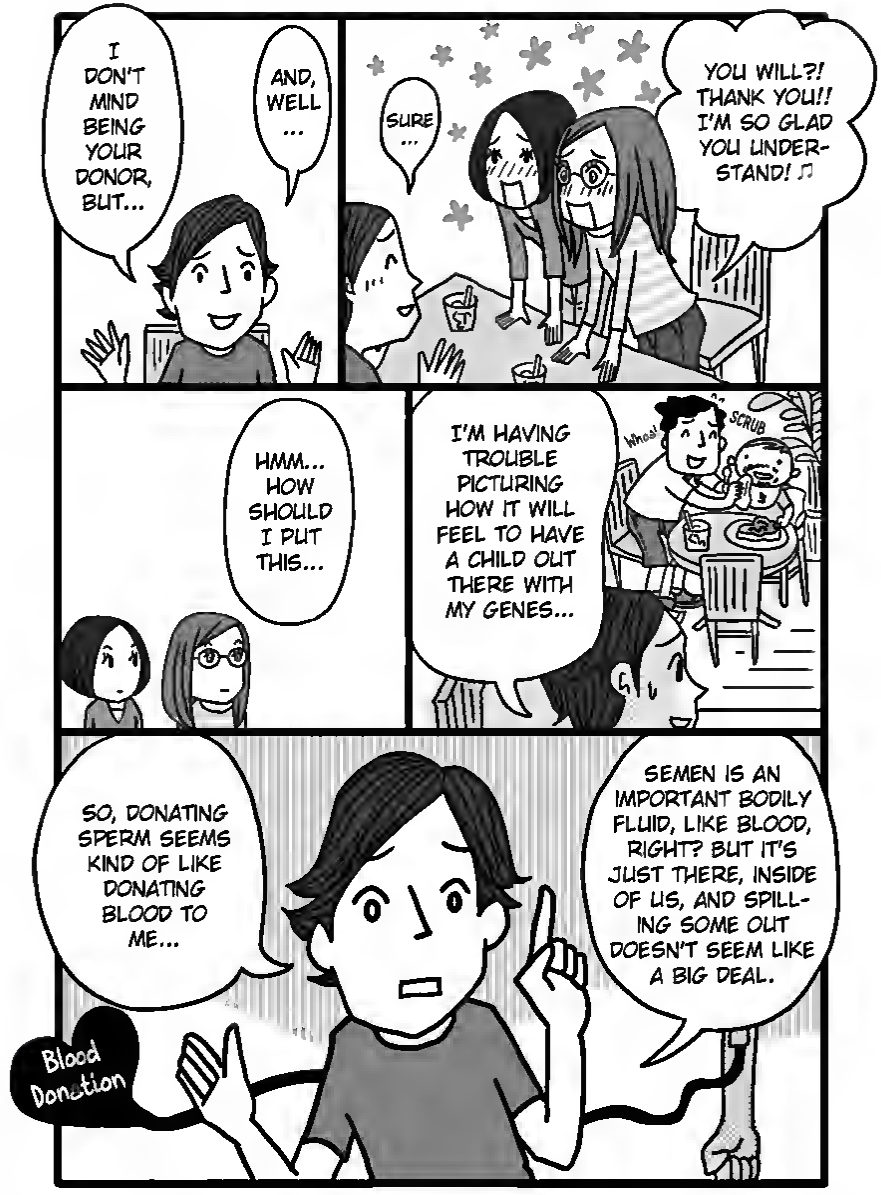
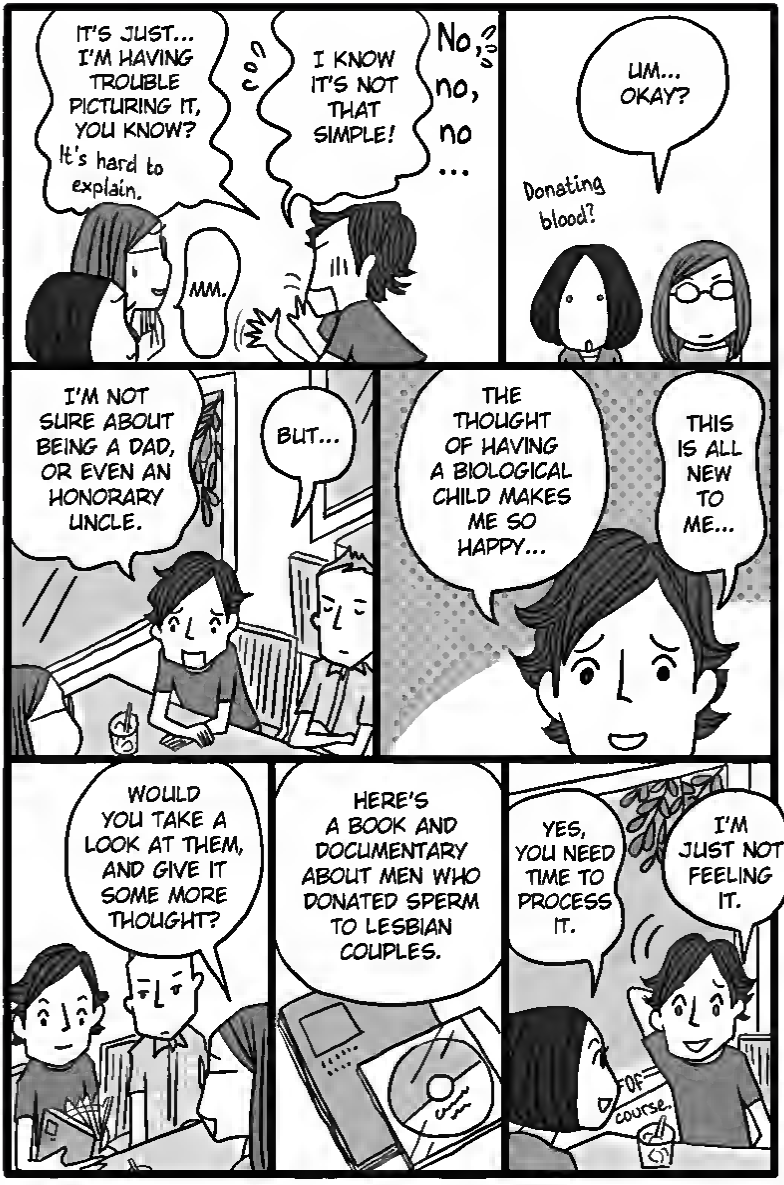
Lililicious~may its fragrance encompass you
lilicious@hanmail.net, http://lililicious.net

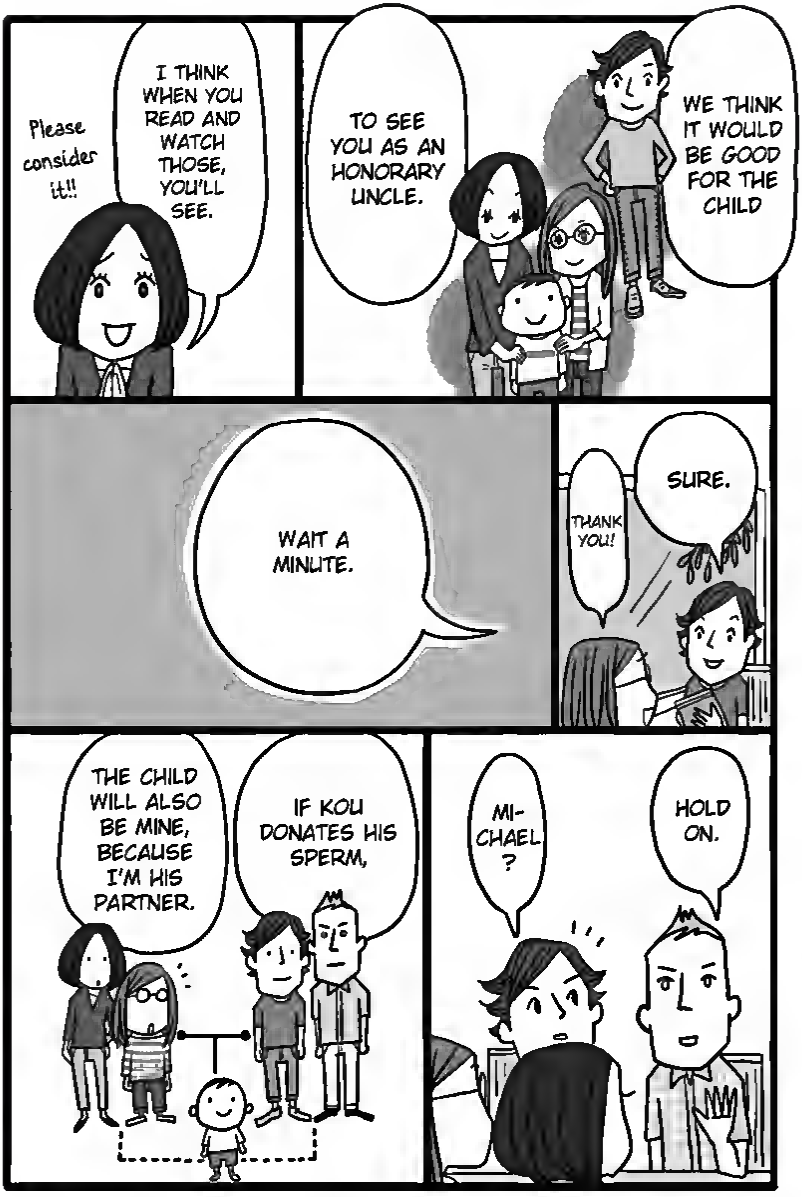

The next person we tried was Kou-kun, a friend we see a handful of times a year.
I'll text him now...
WHAT SHOULD I SAY?
I THINK WE SHOULD KEEP IT LIGHT.
He's also a member of the LGBT community, so we feel like he gets us.
Ahahaha! Don't you dare!
NOT THAT LIGHT! WE CAN'T JUST SPRING IT ON HIM LIKE THAT!
Just kidding
From: Hiroko
Hello, Kou-kun!! Can we have some sperm?
HOW 'BOUT THAT?

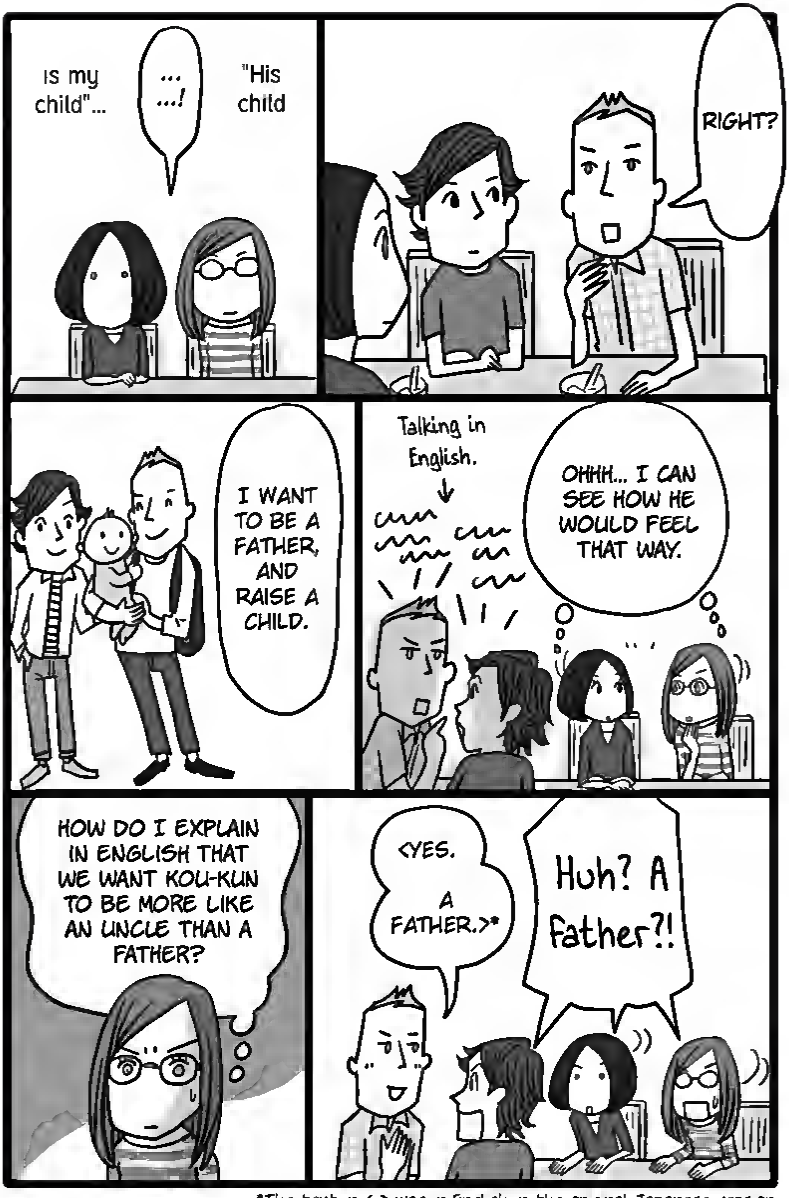

and were looking for a sperm donor.
To tell him that we wanted to have a child
We decided to write to Kou-kun beforehand.
Several days later...
LONG TIME NO SEE!
I HOPE HE'LL UNDERSTAND!
Sent!!
We carefully explained everything, and asked if he would meet with us to hear more about it.
Hello.
THIS IS MY BOYFRIEND, MICHAEL.
He also brought his boyfriend along.
after exchanging several messages with Kou-kun, we met with him in person.
IT WAS A REAL SHOCK!

So we told them about what we were hoping for from a donor.
PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT IT.
BUT I WAS SURPRISED WHEN YOU ASKED ME TO BE YOUR DONOR.
I KNEW THAT YOU WANTED TO HAVE A CHILD,
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
.....
....
YOU'VE DISCUSSED IT A LOT, HUH?
I SEE ...
I'LL DO IT!
Huh?!
MM...

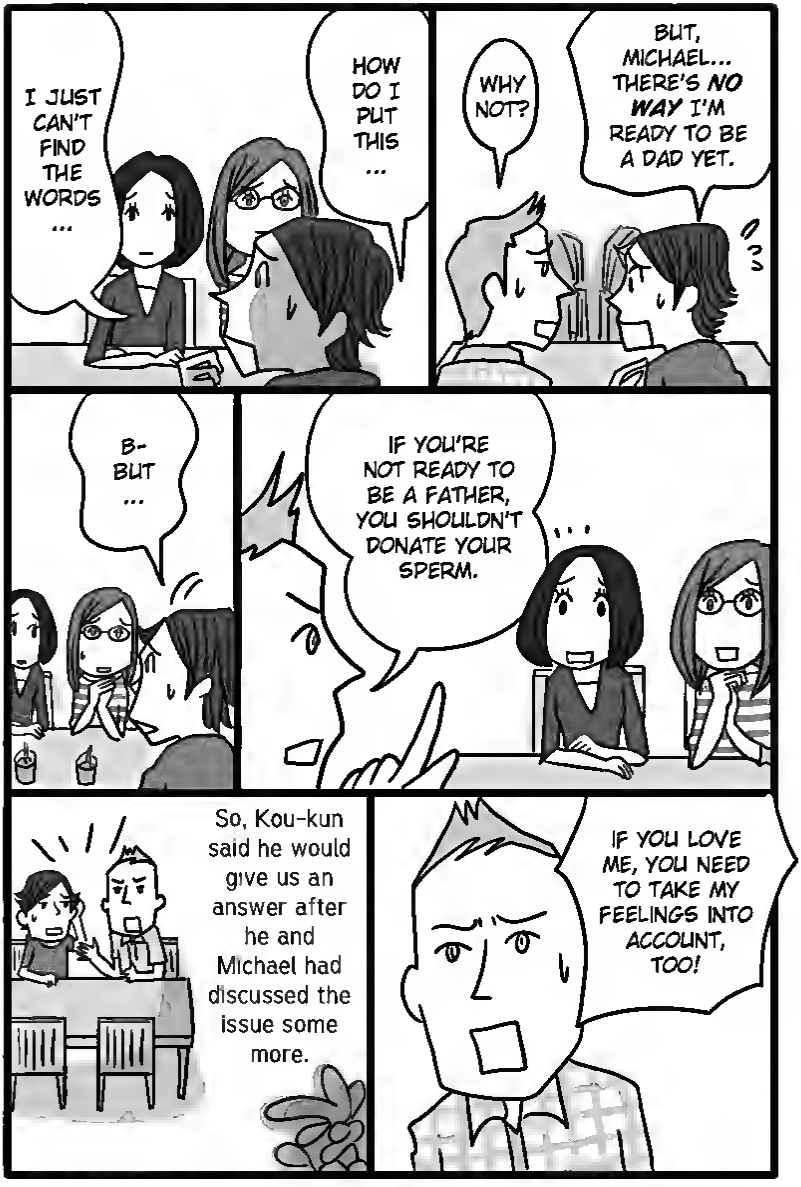

I DON'T MIND BEING YOUR DONOR, BUT...
AND, WELL ...
SURE ...
YOU WILL?! THANK YOU!! I'M SO GLAD YOU UNDER-STAND! ♫
HMM... HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS...
I'M HAVING TROUBLE PICTURING HOW IT WILL FEEL TO HAVE A CHILD OUT THERE WITH MY GENES...
Whoa!
SCRUB
SO, DONATING SPERM SEEMS KIND OF LIKE DONATING BLOOD TO ME...
SEMEN IS AN IMPORTANT BODILY FLUID, LIKE BLOOD, RIGHT? BUT IT'S JUST THERE, INSIDE OF US, AND SPILL-ING SOME OUT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A BIG DEAL.
Blood Donation


IT'S JUST... I'M HAVING TROUBLE PICTURING IT, YOU KNOW?
It's hard to explain.
MM.
I KNOW IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE!
No, no, no...
UM... OKAY?
Donating blood?
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT BEING A DAD, OR EVEN AN HONORARY UNCLE.
BUT...
THE THOUGHT OF HAVING A BIOLOGICAL CHILD MAKES ME SO HAPPY...
THIS IS ALL NEW TO ME...
WOULD YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THEM, AND GIVE IT SOME MORE THOUGHT?
HERE'S A BOOK AND DOCUMENTARY ABOUT MEN WHO DONATED SPERM TO LESBIAN COUPLES.
YES, YOU NEED TIME TO PROCESS IT.
I'M JUST NOT FEELING IT.
Of course.


Please consider it!!
I THINK WHEN YOU READ AND WATCH THOSE, YOU'LL SEE.
TO SEE YOU AS AN HONORARY UNCLE.
WE THINK IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR THE CHILD
WAIT A MINUTE.
THANK YOU!
SURE.
THE CHILD WILL ALSO BE MINE, BECAUSE I'M HIS PARTNER.
IF KOU DONATES HIS SPERM,
MI-CHAEL ?
HOLD ON.

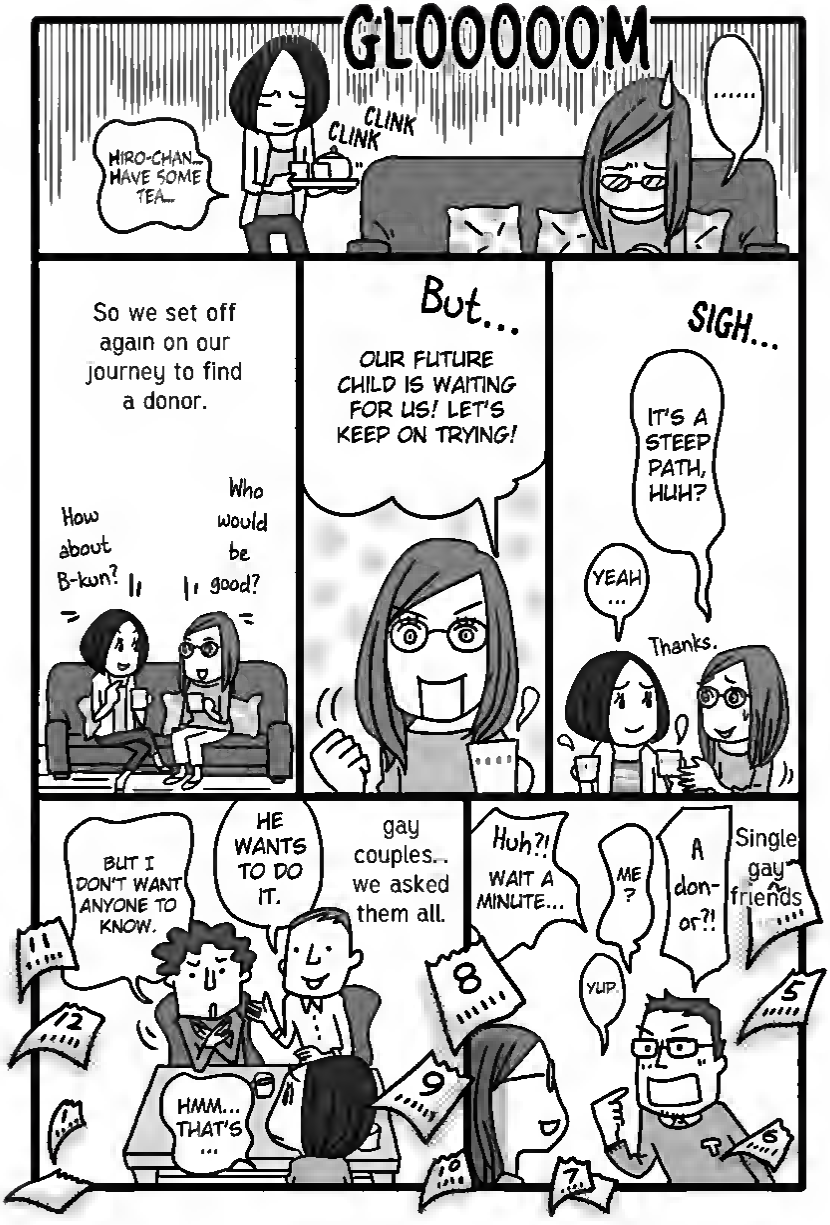

is my child"...
...
...!
"His child
RIGHT?
I WANT TO BE A FATHER, AND RAISE A CHILD.
Talking in English.
OHHH... I CAN SEE HOW HE WOULD FEEL THAT WAY.
HOW DO I EXPLAIN IN ENGLISH THAT WE WANT KOU-KUN TO BE MORE LIKE AN UNCLE THAN A FATHER?
<YES. A FATHER.>*
Huh? A father?!

*The text in < > was in English in the original Japanese version.


I JUST CAN'T FIND THE WORDS ...
HOW DO I PUT THIS ...
WHY NOT?
BUT, MICHAEL... THERE'S NO WAY I'M READY TO BE A DAD YET.
??
B-BUT ...
IF YOU'RE NOT READY TO BE A FATHER, YOU SHOULDN'T DONATE YOUR SPERM.
...
So, Kou-kun said he would give us an answer after he and Michael had discussed the issue some more.
IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU NEED TO TAKE MY FEELINGS INTO ACCOUNT, TOO!

IT IS WHAT IT IS, HUH?
So the two of them needed to talk about it.
but Michael insisted that any child of Kou-kun's would also be his.
I WANT TO BE A FATHER.
SURE.
Kou-kun seemed to be on board with the idea of being our donor,
As summer came to an end, I couldn't help but sense that our path to motherhood was proving to be more difficult than expected.
YEAH, NO SENSE IN LETTING IT GET US DOWN. WANT TO GO EAT SOMETHING DELICIOUS? ♫

I'M SORRY FOR TAKING SO LONG WITH THIS.
THIS HI, IS KOU.
RINGALING...
Three months later, Kou-kun gave us his answer.
Kou-kun
I see ...
I DON'T THINK THAT'S GOING TO CHANGE ANYTIME SOON...
It's your kid, right? That makes you the dad.
No, this is differ-ent...
THE THING IS, MICHAEL AND I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO AGREE ON WHAT "FAMILY" MEANS TO US.
We didn't want to put Kou-kun and his boyfriend through any more of that, so we told him we thought it was out of the question for now.
OH...
I THINK IT WILL BE TOO HARD ...
THANKS TO BOTH OF YOU FOR PUTTING SO MUCH THOUGHT INTO THIS.


GLOOOOOM
HIRO-CHAN... HAVE SOME TEA...
CLINK CLINK
.....
So we set off again on our journey to find a donor.
How about B-kun?
Who would be good?
But...
OUR FUTURE CHILD IS WAITING FOR US! LET'S KEEP ON TRYING!
SIGH...
IT'S A STEEP PATH, HUH?
YEAH ...
Thanks.
BUT I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW.
HE WANTS TO DO IT.
gay couples... we asked them all.
HMM... THAT'S ...
Huh?! WAIT A MINUTE...
ME ?
A don-or?!
Single gay friends
YUP
11
12
9
8
7
5
6

RUSTLE RUSTLE...
we'd already been at it for a year and a half.
SIGH
WE'LL AWAIT YOUR RESPONSE.
Okay.
By the time we asked a fifth friend, E-san..
2
3
but things weren't moving forward
MM... HE'LL GET BACK TO US.
WHAT DID HE SAY?
Word had spread that we were looking for a donor, and we'd talked to a lot of people about it,
We were still anxiously awaiting a positive answer
when we got a call from a TV studio.
03123456
BRRRING.....
WHO IS IT?

I Want Us to Become a "Colorful Society"

On November 5, 2015, the Shibuya ward of Tokyo became the first place in Japan to issue civil partnership certificates to same-gender couples. The news made quite a splash! The new policy is laid out in Shibuya's "Ordinance to Promote a Society Respectful of Gender Equality and Diversity." The applicants must be at least 20 years of age and reside in Shibuya. The certificates indicate that the local government recognizes their relationship as "equivalent to marriage," and should make life easier for the couples by granting them the status of "family" for housing purposes, hospital visitation, consent to emergency surgery, etc.

On that same day in November, the Setagaya ward of Tokyo also began allowing same-gender couples to officially pledge a partnership oath. As of February 2016, 8 couples in Shibuya and 20 couples in Setagaya have taken part.

And it's not just Tokyo. Iga, in Mie Prefecture, Takarazuka, in Hyogo Prefecture, and Naha, in Okinawa, all plan to implement similar measures in 2016. Same-gender couples are a perfectly natural part of Japanese society, and exist throughout the country. I fervently hope that every part of Japan will come to recognize our relationships.

In response to these local efforts, private enterprise is also making strides. For example, some cell phone companies' family plans now include same-gender couples, and some life insurance plans now allow one to designate a same-gender partner as a beneficiary. I'm glad to see these advances happening.

One area where I would like to see change is in real estate. When a same-gender couple purchases a property, they can't take out a joint loan together. I'm still waiting for that to change.

Shibuya's partnership certificates are an administrative first for Japan, and they're a major step forward. But there is more work to be done. For one thing, it costs at least 15,000 yen* to prepare the notarized documents for a partnership certificate, whereas applying for a marriage license is free. (Setagaya's oath is free of charge, however.) So it's still unequal treatment, unfortunately.

Also, Shibuya's new policy is only a local ordinance, so the certificates are not legally binding and cannot offer couples the legal benefits of marriage. Certificate holders still face many major hardships in their daily lives, as they are not granted marital status in regards to tax deductions, inheritance, joint custody of children, and so on and so forth.

I have hope now that this will be solved through marriage equality. We don't yet have it in Japan, but it is becoming a global trend. Denmark has been offering registered partnerships since 1989. And in 2001, the Netherlands became the first country to legalize marriage between partners of the same gender. In June 2015, a Supreme Court verdict made marriage equality the law of the land in the United States as well

It is my belief that marriage equality is also necessary in Japan. We aren't asking for special rights, we simply want to change things so that marriage rights are available to everyone, not just straight couples. Making life easier for minority groups is sure to benefit the majority in our society as well. I think a society in which people are free from gender discrimination, where everyone can just be themselves, will be more comfortable for people of *all* sexualities.

The Olympics and Paralympics are coming to Japan in 2020. I dearly wish for us to become a colorful society that welcomes diversity, starting with LGBT people

*Around $150 US

How Same-Sex Couples Have Children

As noted in this manga, there are several avenues by which same-sex couples can have children. They can be broken down into roughly four categories:

1) **Blended families** (bringing children from a previous relationship into a new family)
2) **Sperm donation** (in the case of two mothers)
3) **Surrogacy** (in the case of two fathers)
4) **Adoption**

The biggest gender-based difference is in the ability to carry a pregnancy. Women can use donated sperm to have children, and if one member of a couple is infertile, the other can try instead. Or they can both get pregnant, which is also wonderful.

But the sperm donation route is far from easy. Married straight couples can use AID (artificial insemination by donor), but we can't. Our options are essentially to ask a friend or acquaintance to donate sperm, or to use a sperm bank from abroad.

And in the case of infertility, Japanese hospitals will deny you fertility treatment under the Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology's guidelines if you are an openly lesbian couple.

Despite these hurdles, more and more couples are attempting the process of trial and error on their own, and so the number of lesbian mothers is increasing even in Japan.

For men, there is the option of egg donation and surrogacy, but that is not allowed in Japan yet. So couples who want to do that need to go abroad, to America or some other country, which is quite a high hurdle to clear.

As for adoption, it's becoming increasingly common in countries that have marriage equality, like in America and Europe, for example.

Unfortunately, same-gender couples aren't allowed to jointly adopt children in Japan. I would like to see the system change to include us.

Chapter 8

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